



Education Legislation and Inspectors

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina monitors and actively supports the development, adoption and implementation of a more effective education legislative framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina and works with education inspectors to increase oversight capacities.

Many of the problems and weaknesses of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are related to the fragmented structure of education in the country. The failure of existing bodies to implement existing laws and ensure compliance with Council of Europe post-accession requirements impedes efforts to ensure schools are accessible to all and free of discriminatory and segregatory practices.

The Mission works to assist the country to come closer to international standards by strengthening the capacity of institutions to respect the rule of law and develop stronger institutions capable of meeting the challenge of eliminating discrimination in schools.

The Mission also monitors and actively engages in the development, adoption, and implementation of the educational legislative framework, as well as lower level laws and bylaws for pre-school, primary and secondary education. The Mission monitors and uses other related legislation such as the Anti-Discrimination Law as a tool for education reform. The Mission also works with the Conference of Ministers of Education and advocates for greater reform implementation.

The Mission works with education inspectors and other domestic bodies to support sustainable, professional and independent oversight mechanisms. Education inspectors are the first control mechanism to address violations, misinterpretations or non-application of the law. Ministers of Education are the second instance bodies. The main tasks of education inspectors are to monitor and analyze the administrative functioning of all education institutions and investigate complaints from citizens about problems in these institutions. With these responsibilities, inspectors are fundamental to a well-functioning education system.

The position of education inspectors in BiH however is often not used appropriately and as a result the country lacks a strong education oversight body. The cause of this problem is in part due to vague and inadequate legislation governing the role of education inspectors, a lack of independence and impartiality in their appointments and political interference in their decisions. Education inspectors are also faced with enormous practical constraints such as a lack of financial and logistical support and professional training.



In an effort to improve this situation, the Mission has had excellent co-operation with education inspectors for many years. This co-operation resulted in the organization of two conferences in 2007 and 2008 which gathered all inspectors from across BiH, and a report in September 2007 entitled *Education Inspectors: A Neglected Resource*. In this report, a number of areas were identified as needing reform, namely the status of inspectors, their responsibilities and workload, the legislation regulating their work and their independence from political authorities.

More recently in 2010, the Mission, in co-operation with the Regional Co-operation Council, convened a conference entitled *The Role of Inspectors in Education Quality Assurance*. The event was attended by delegations from six Western Balkan countries (Albania, BiH, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia). The delegates were brought together to discuss the role, status, competencies, and activities of education inspectors, and to share best practices. The participants committed to develop further co-operation between inspectorates and other state institutions responsible for education inspections within the Western Balkans.

The Mission views education inspectors as crucial for the sustainability of ongoing efforts in educational reform. Future planning foresees an increased focus on providing education inspectors with further professional development and training in order to improve their efficiency. The Mission will also soon provide education inspectors with training to bolster their professionalism when handling citizens' complaints. The overall aim of such training will be to introduce means to safeguard the independence of their work as stipulated in the laws of BiH.

In addition, the Mission will support domestic initiatives for legislative reform and improvements in compliance with international standards. The Mission will also support further improvement of internal co-operation among BiH education inspectors and between the education inspectors and the Ministries of Education, the first and second instance bodies respectively in the complaint mechanism process.



The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina assists BiH in meeting its OSCE commitments and in progressing towards its stated goal of Euro-Atlantic integration by strengthening security and stability through completion of peace-building within the Dayton framework and developing inclusive political discourse and democratically accountable institutions that respect diversity, promote consensus and respect the rule of law. The Mission takes a comprehensive and integrated approach through its field presence, reflecting an emphasis on developing cohesive communities and on the timely identification of obstacles to progress.